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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3260
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES IMMEDIATE
RUEHBM/AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST IMMEDIATE 0475
RUEHCH/AMEMBASSY CHISINAU IMMEDIATE 0348
RUEHKV/AMEMBASSY KYIV IMMEDIATE 0501
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 5680
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 3686
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE IMMEDIATE 3208
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE 1821

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 007484

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/21/2016
TAGS: [OSCE](#) [EUN](#) [PREL](#) [MD](#) [RS](#) [UP](#) [FR](#)
SUBJECT: TRANSNISTRIA: GOF AGREES IN SUBSTANCE ON PCE, BUT
DOUBTS RUSSIAN ACQUIESCENCE

REF: A. STATE 187131

[1](#)B. PARIS 7266

[1](#)C. STATE 181103

PARIS 00007484 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah Rosenblatt for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Aurelia Bouchez, DAS-equivalent for Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, explained on November 17 that France did not disagree in substance about the need for a multilateral peacekeeping mission in Transnistria, but was doubtful that the Russians would easily be convinced. She thought Russia might be more amenable to the idea if it was presented to them in the framework of EU-Russia security cooperation or by arguing that an OSCE mission would legitimize Russian military presence in the area. Given the current negative climate (Russian actions in Georgia, unclear Ukrainian position, etc), however, she was not optimistic. Bouchez suggested we also take into account developing discussions between Presidents Putin and Voronin, and the potential impact of Romania's EU accession. She cautioned that unless other EU countries, besides Poland and the Baltic states, were willing to contribute significantly to a PKF, the discussion was futile. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) In follow-up to ref B discussions, we delivered reftel A talking points November 17 to Aurelia Bouchez, DAS-equivalent for Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Bouchez was grateful for Washington's response and said she would be eager to discuss the U.S. position with her German and British counterparts. She asked if the subject had been broached bilaterally with Moscow; if similar points were being shared in other EU capitals; and if the U.S. intended to take up the issue at the December 4-5 OSCE ministerial. We explained that, for the moment, the information was being shared on an if-asked basis, and that our intention was to begin discussion of the issue with interested European partners.

POSSIBLE ARGUMENTS

[1](#)3. (C) Bouchez said that the GOF did not disagree in substance with the U.S. position, but quickly added that it would be extremely difficult to convince the Russians. Moreover, even discussing an international force could induce them to take a harder line. She suggested that the U.S. and

interested European partners, like France, present the idea in terms of EU-Russia security cooperation (the third space of the EU/Russia common space agreements). Russia, she said, had put a great deal of pressure on the EU to expand security cooperation and this could be pitched as a first step of such collaboration, using the OSCE as context. Another possibility might be to convince the Russians that an OSCE mission could be used to legitimize their military presence in the area. Bouchez wondered, however, if the Russians might counter with a proposal to associate their current mission with the OSCE, with no need for additional forces.

HARDENING OF THE RUSSIAN POSITION

14. (C) Given the current negative climate, Bouchez cautioned, it was unlikely Russia was open to arguments about the need to internationalize the force. Russia, she said, had shown no disposition to cooperate in recent months, and she feared that even raising the subject might push Moscow to harden its position on Transnistria. Bouchez was also concerned that Russia could retaliate by opposing EU initiatives in the CIS countries. She added that we could not allow discussions of an OSCE mission to derail the Russian commitment to inspections of military stockpiles, something we assured Bouchez was equally important to the U.S.

MOLDOVA MUST DO ITS PART

15. (C) Bouchez stressed that Moldova would need to be part of any OSCE force. Moldova had consistently tried to escape from its responsibilities because of the difficulties of dealing with the Russians. In order for an OSCE mission to be successful and assist in leading to a political settlement, Moldova's participation was critical, she emphasized.

PARIS 00007484 002.2 OF 002

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

16. (C) Presidents Putin and Voronin, Bouchez noted, reportedly had a frank discussion of Transnistria during their talks in late August. Bilateral working groups had been convened to produce papers on: 1) a stronger constitutional mechanism to secure protection of minorities; 2) Russian right of property, and 3) Moldovan neutrality. The working groups, she said, were a step in the right direction, but it remained unclear if there had been any real progress on the documents themselves. France would be seeking more information from Moldova. Bouchez asked if the U.S. had any indications that EU countries would be willing to participate in an OSCE force, other than Poland or the Baltic states, who would not be good candidates to work with the Russians. We explained that we had only just begun discussions, but that we hoped a Western European country would be willing to anchor the EU contribution. Bouchez commented that Romania would join the EU in January and had particularly strong ideas about Transnistria.

COMMENT

17. (C) Bouchez welcomed the U.S. points on a possible OSCE force but was rather pessimistic about Russian acceptance of the plan. She used our meeting, however, to brainstorm on possible ways to approach the Russians. Bouchez was clearly concerned that any move by the EU could result in further deterioration of EU-Russia relations.